

THACHER

A BRIEF RULE...

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Bethesda, Maryland

# A Brief Rule to guide the Common People of New- England how to Order themselves and theirs in the *Small-Pox* and *Measels*.

**T**HE *Small Pox* (whose nature and cure the *Measels* follow) is a disease in the blood, endeavouring to recover a new form and state.

2. THIS nature attempts — 1. By Separation of the impure from the pure, thrusting it out from the Veins to the Flesh. — 2. By driving out the impure from the Flesh to the Skin.

3. THE first Separation is done in the first four Days by a Feverish boiling (Ebullition) of the Blood, laying down the impurities in the Fleshy parts which kindly effected the Feverish tumult is calmed.

4. THE second Separation from the Flesh to the Skin, or *Superficies* is done through the rest of the time of the disease.

5. THERE are several Errors in ordering these sick ones in both these Operations

tions of Natur ... prove very dangerous and commonly deadly either by overmuch hastening Nature beyond its own pace, or in hindering of it from its own vigorous operation.

6. THE Separation by Ebullition in the Feverish heat is over heightned by too much Clothes, too hot a room, hot Cordials, as *Diascordium*, *Gascons powder* and such like, for hence come *Phrenzies*, dangerous excessive sweats, or flowing of the Pocks into one overspreading sore, vulgarly called the *Flox*.

7. THE same Separation is overmuch hindred by preposterous cooling that Feverish boiling heat, by *blood letting*, *Glysters*, *Vomits*, *purging*, or *cooling medicines*. For though these many times hasten the coming forth of the *Pox*, yet they take away that supply which should keep our till they are ripe, wherefore they sink again to the deadly danger of the sick.

8. IF a *Phrenzie* happen, or through a *Plethora*(that is fulness of blood) the Circulation of the blood be hindred, and thereupon the whole mass of blood choaked up, then either let blood, or see that their diet, or medicines be not altogether cooling, but let them in no wise be heating, therefore

therefore let him lye no otherwise covered in his bed then he was wont in his health : His Chamber not made hot with fire if the weather be temperate, let him drink small Beer only warm'd with a Tost, let him sup up thin *Water-gruel*, or *Water-pottage* made only of Indian Flower and Water, instead of *Oatmeal* : Let him eat *bold Apples* : But I would not advise at this time any medicine besides. By this means that excessive *Ebullition* (or boiling of his blood) will by degrees abate, and the Symptoms cease; if not, but the blood be so enraged that it will admit of no delay, either let blood (if Age will bear it) or else give some notably cooling medicine, or refresh him with more free Air.

9. BUT if the boiling of the blood be weak and dull that there is cause to fear it is not able to work a Separation, as its wont to be in such as have been let blood, or are fat, or Flegmatick, or brought low by some other sickness or labour of the (*Gonorrhœa*) running of the Reins, or some other Evacuation : In such Cases, *Cordials* must drive them out, or they must die.

10. IN time of driving out the *Pockes* from the Flesh, here care must be had the *Postules* keep out in a right

till they have attain'd their end without going in again for that is deadly.

11. IN this time take heed when the *Pustules* appear whilst not yet ripe, least by too much heat there arise a new *Ebullition* (or Feverish boiling) for this troubles the driving out, or brings back the separated parts in the blood, or the Fleshly parts overheated are disabled from a right suppuration, or lastly the temper of the blood and tone of the Flesh is so perverted that it cannot overcome and digest the matter driving out.

12. YET on the other hand the breaking out must not be hindered, by exposing the sick unto the cold. The degree of heat must be such as is natural agrees with the temper of the Fleshly parts: That which exceeds or falls is dangerous: Therefore the season of the year, Age of the sick, and their manner of life here require a discreet and different Consideration, requiring the Counsel of an expert Physician.

13. BUT if by any error a new *Ebullition* ariseth, the same art must be used to allay it as is before express.

14. IF the *Pustules* go in and a flux follow (for else there is no such thing) *Cordials* are to be used, yet moderate

moderate and not too often for fear of new *Ebullition*.

15. IF much spitting (*Ptyalismus*) follow you may hope all will go well, therefore by no means hinder it: Only with warm small Beer let their mouths be washed.

16. WHEN the *Pustules* are dryed and fallen, purge well, especially if it be in *Autumn*.

17. AS soon as this disease appears by its signs, let the sick abstain from Flesh and Wine, and open Air, let him use small Beer warmed with a Toft for his ordinary drink, and moderately when he desires it. For Food use *Water-gruel*, *Water-pottage*, and other things having no manifest hot quality, easy of digestion, boild Apples, and Milk sometimes for change, but the coldness taken off. Let the use of his bed be according to the season of the year, and the multitude of the *Pocks*, or as sound persons are wont. In Summer let him rise according to custom, yet so as to be defended both from heat and cold in Excess, the disease will be the sooner over and less troublesome, for being kept in bed nourisheth the Feverish heat and makes the *Pocks* break out with a painful inflammation.

18. IN a colder season and breaking forth of a multitude of *Pustules*, forcing the sick to keep his bed, let him be covered according to his custom in health, a moderate fire in the Winter being kindled in his Chamber

ber, Morning and Evening: neither need he keep his Arms always in bed, or ly still in the same place, or fear least he should sweat which is very dangerous especially to youth.

19. BEFORE the fourth Day use no medicines to drive out, nor be too strict with the sick; for by how much the more gently the *Pustules* do grow, by so much the fuller and perfecter will the Separation be.

20. ON the fourth Day a gentle *Cordial* may help once given.

21. FROM that time a small draught of warm Milk (not hot) a little dy'd with *Saffron* may be given Morning and Evening till the *Pustules* are come to their due greatness and ripeness.

22. WHEN the *Pustules* begin to dry and crust, lest the rotten vapours strike inward, which sometimes causeth sudden Death; take Morning and Evening some temperate *Cordial* as four or five spoonfuls of *Malago Wine* tinged with a little *Saffron*.

23. WHEN the *Pustules* are dried and fallen off, purge once and again, especially in the *Autumn Pocks*.

24. BEWARE of anointing with *Oils*, *Fats*, *Ointments*, and such defensives, for keeping the corrupted matter in the *Pustules* from drying up; by the moisture, they fret deeper into the Flesh, and so make the more deep Scarrs.

25. THE young and lively Men that are brought

ought to a plentiful sweat in this sickness, about the eighth Day the sweat drops of it self, by no means afterwards to be drawn out again the sick thereupon feels most troublesome, disrest and anguish, and then makes abundance of water, and so dyes.

26. FEW young Men and strong thus handled escape, except they fall into abundance of spitting or plentiful bleeding at the Nose.

27. SIGNS discovering the Assault at first are beating pain in the Head, Forehead, and temples, pain in the Back, great sleepiness, glistring of the Eyes, shining glimmerings seem before them, itching of them also, with tears flowing of themselves, itching of the Nose, short breath, dry Cough, oft sneezing, hoarseness, heat, redness, and sense of prick- ing over the whole Body, terrors in the sleep, sorrow and restlessness, beating of the heart, Urine sometimes as in health, some- time filthy from great *Ebullition*, and all this or many of these with a Feverish dis- temper.

28. SIGNS warning of the probable Event. If they break forth easily, quickly, and soon come to ripening, if the Symptoms be gentle, the Fever mild and after the breaking forth it abate; if the voice be free, breathing easy; es- pecially if the Pox be red, white, distinct, soft, few, round, sharp top'd, only without and not in the Inward parts; if there be large bleeding at the Nose. These signs are hopeful.

29. BUT such signs are doubtful, when they difficultly appear, when they sink in again when they are black, blewish, green, hard, all in one, if the Fever abate not with their breaking forth, if there be swooning, difficulty of breathing, great thirst, quinsey, great unquietness, and it is very dangerous, if there be join'd with it some other malignant Fever, call'd by some the pestilential Pox: the Spotted Fever is oft joined with it.

30. DEADLY Signs if the Flux of the Belly happen, when they are brake forth, if the Urine be bloody, or black, or the Ordure of that Colour; Or if pure blood be cast out by the Belly or Gums: These signs are for the most part deadly.

These things have I written Candid Reader, not to inform the Learned Physician that hath much more cause to understand what pertains to this disease than I, but to give some light to those that have not such Advantages, leaving the difficulty of this disease to the Physicians Art, Wisdom, & Faithfulness, for the right managing of them in the whole course of the disease tends both to the Patients safety, and the Physicians desired success in his Administrations: For in vain is the Physicians Art employed, if they are not under a Regular Regiment. I am, tho' no Physician, yet a well-wisher to the sick: And therefore intreating the Lord to turn our hearts, and stay His Hand. I am

A Friend, Reader to thy

21 d. 11 m. 1677-8.

Welfare,

Thomas Thacher.

A Brief Rule...

Thacher, Thomas. 1677-8.  
National Library of Medicine  
Bethesda, MD

Condition On Receipt: The full leather binding was dirty, worn and abraded, but was in relatively sound condition. The sewing was intact. The text pages were laminated with silk and mounted on poor quality blank pages. The text pages were torn, dirty, discolored, stained, acidic and weak. The inks tested appeared stable in water.

Treatment: The volume was microfilmed. The volume was collated and disbound. The inks were tested for solubility. The head, tail and pages were dry cleaned and washed and then buffered (deacidified) with magnesium bicarbonate solution and the silk laminate was removed. The pages were encapsulated in polyester film. The volume was pamphlet bound in full cloth. A leather label was stamped in gold foil.

